

walk beside you and never change that word. I use the word close as it can mean close to the horse or close to the vehicle.

Using a titbit or a toy beside your left leg is ideal. A titbit will probably sway a puppy's mind that being beside you brings rewards.

Walking a small left hand circle is an ideal way to practice the "close" position. A left hand circle means we are herding the dog. Once he understands his position, gradually increase the distance and change of direction and straight line working.

Remember, a little good work is ten times better than lots of bad! A few steps at a time and some play as a reward is important. Keep your training fun, be consistent and the end result will be a well trained happy dog and a proud and happy owner.

Michele Boys

Training with a carriage for the non-equestrian

Start your training off road in a safe environment. You will essentially be taking the role of 'groom'. You do not need prior experience, but you do need to be fairly



confident with horses, as you may be asked to hold them in an emergency.

It is a good idea to go for a drive without your dog initially to familiarise yourself with the movement and procedures. The driver will show you how to hold the horse while they get on the carriage and will advise you what to do in an emergency. They may ask you to carry a head collar rope.

Ask your driver initially to let you know when the pony will be going into a trot or canter, rough ground, potholes etc. Once you are used to being on the back you will feel more secure and you will start to know the changes of speed.

When first meeting up, be cautious, as the dog could be trodden on or kicked. Do not let it run around the horse's feet.

Initially all training should be on the lead. Do not wrap

play in your space and not in his. That means that the play must be near to you.

When training make sure that the sessions are short and mingled with play.

Teaching your dog to come is done with titbits as a lure and if you have a friend who can hold him gently whilst you run away from him calling his name, reward him as he comes to you. At a later stage in training teach him to sit in front of you. by raising both your hands close to your bellybutton, combined with the word sit. This can be built up and used in conjunction with the stay exercise to build up the recall.



Teaching the stay must be taught slowly and built up steadily. Start by making sure the dog has learnt the meaning of the word sit and

he is happily and relaxed whilst doing so. Introduce the word "Stay" in a quiet but firm voice, and stand beside him for five seconds.

To progress this, add five seconds at a time, until he is happy and confident to sit still for 30 seconds with you beside him. If he breaks at 20 seconds then go back to 15 seconds until you are sure he is steady. Once he is confident at 30 seconds, you progress to the next step.

Work towards a one minute stay in both sit and down. There needs to be a release command at the end of the stay. You must choose a word that works for you, but two pats on the back with the words "OK" may be used. These words can then be applied from horseback or from the carriage to release the dog from a stay position.

Stays are about the dog having confidence in you, so it is important to keep on bonding with the dog the whole time.

Teaching your dog to walk beside you once again is easiest taught at a very young age. Use a word that means you want him to

the lead around your hand you may have to release the dog quickly in an emergency. At no time should a lead be tied to the carriage.

Start with the dog on the left hand side, you will find they quickly get into the rhythm of the carriage.

The dog must stay behind the axle and one of the most common problems is they will want to forge ahead to be with the pony. This must be discouraged with commands such as "get back" and "with me". Try not to use commands you would use on the ground such as "heel".

A period of 30 minutes is enough to start off with. Remember this is your dog in "working" mode which they are not used to and they will find it difficult to concentrate.

This is not very long for a horse to be exercised so the driver may appreciate you offering to put your dog in the car and go for another short drive in order to complete the horse's exercise.

After you have been out a few times and your dog is starting to work well, you can try off the lead (after an

initial warm-up). This is best tried on a narrow track so the dog cannot drift off too far and will require far more verbal commands and encouragement. Once the dog is off lead they can be anywhere in a semi-circle behind the axle.

The time you are out with the carriage can be gradually lengthened as can the time off the lead. It is good eventually to try some work on the road but this should always be on the lead.

As well as working on tracks, try and work in a field, this will cause far more difficulty for the dog as there will be lots of things to take their attention i.e. rabbits, pheasants, other dogs etc. and you will have to work that much harder to keep the dog's attention.

Remember whilst you are out working do a couple of one minute "stays", the



carriage is at a halt and the dog should be beside or behind the carriage for this exercise.

It is most important that all training be done with lots of praise. Most of all have fun!

Equipment needed:

Hard hat, pair old leather gloves, six foot training lead, strong flat collar (no slips or half checks etc.).

A carriage driver in your area with a four wheeled carriage with backstep and preferably a calm pony used to dogs.

A penknife in case the dog's lead gets tangled around the carriage wheels.

Chris Cleland

Training to work with a carriage for whip/driver

Start introducing your dog to the axle when he is happy to walk and trot on a slack lead, and has some basic obedience and confidence with his handler. Begin with the dog at heel then both follow the carriage gradually getting closer. In the initial stages ask someone else to drive your horse while you train your dog.

The next step is for you to get up in the carriage. Swap the lead for a light lunge line that can be played out if necessary. It is a dangerous practice to tie a dog to the carriage.

A dog that has a natural instinct to 'run under' or to 'coach' will need a little guidance so that he runs happily and in safety.

If the dog chooses to run in front of the axle he is likely to get kicked or struck from a long striding horse, also he may be tempted to make his exit in front of the wheel.

When the axle happens to be lower than the dog's shoulders and the dog puts himself in front he becomes trapped. Trotting with the shoulders under an axle that is lower than the dog will cause him to move in an unnatural way.

To prevent this while training and to establish a safe way of running, an obstruction can be hung from the axle. A light bar, perhaps an old broom handle, a pair of garden canes or a sheet of cardboard. A string from the front of the carriage will stop the obstruction from swinging onto the dog.